LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

572.05
FA
v.33

PUBLICATIONS

OF

# FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

---

ANTHROPOLOGICAL SERIES

VOLUME 33

---

CHICAGO, U.S.A.

1941–1947

572.05
FA
v. 33

CONTENTS

PAGE

1. Camp, Clan, and Kin Among the Cow Creek Seminole of Florida . . . . . 1
   By *Alexander Spoehr.*

2. Kinship System of the Seminole . . . . . 29
   By *Alexander Spoehr.*

3. The Florida Seminole Camp . . . . . 115
   By *Alexander Spoehr.*

4. Changing Kinship Systems . . . . . 151
   By *Alexander Spoehr.*

# CAMP, CLAN, AND KIN AMONG THE COW CREEK SEMINOLE OF FLORIDA

BY

ALEXANDER SPOEHR

ASSISTANT CURATOR, AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

THE LIBRARY OF THE
AUG 8 1941
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

ANTHROPOLOGICAL SERIES
FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
VOLUME 33, NUMBER 1
AUGUST 2, 1941

PUBLICATION 498

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY FIELD MUSEUM PRESS

5'(2.05
FA
v.33

# CONTENTS

PAGE

List of Illustrations . . . . . 5

I. Introduction . . . . . 7

II. Camp, Clan, and Kin Among the Cow Creek Seminole . . . . . 9
The Camp . . . . . 10
The Clan . . . . . 14
Kinship . . . . . 16
Levirate and Sororate . . . . . 23

III. Conclusion . . . . . 24

Bibliography . . . . . 26

Index . . . . . 27



MAY 19 1948
Dept.

TEXT FIGURE

PAGE

1. Clan camps of the Cow Creek Seminole . . . . . 11

# CAMP, CLAN, AND KIN AMONG THE COW CREEK SEMINOLE OF FLORIDA

## I. INTRODUCTION

The main body of ethnographic knowledge of the Southeast concerns the four major tribes that dominated the area in early historic times—the Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Cherokee. Thanks largely to the assiduous work of Swanton, this knowledge has been brought to an orderly state. At the present time, apart from the historical studies of Foreman, Debo, and others, and apart from work directed toward tying together archaeological and ethnological data, research in the ethnology of the Southeast tends to reflect two principal interests. One of these is the study of special aspects of the culture of particular tribes, suggested by contradictions or obvious lacunae in the literature. Although ethnographic material among most of the Southeastern groups is primarily a matter of the past and no longer amenable to direct observation, this type of work has been valuable in clarifying a number of aspects of Indian culture. Haas' articles on Natchez clans and on the dual division of Creek towns (Haas, 1939, 1940), and Speck's work on the Southeastern Siouans (Speck, 1935, 1938a, b) may be cited as examples. The second interest, related to the first, is concerned with the comparative study of culture change in a series of tribes. It is exemplified by Eggan's paper on shifting patterns of kinship, wherein he concluded that a Crow type of kinship system was formerly widespread in the Southeast, that the variations from this type recorded from Southeastern tribes represented a shift from a matrilineal toward a patrilineal emphasis, and that these variations were directly related to different degrees of the same type of acculturation (Eggan, 1937). This paper indicated the fruitfulness of further comparative study of Southeastern social organization to determine as far as possible the basic similarities, the changes which have occurred, and the conditions under which these changes have taken place. Such research can be directed toward the solution of several types of problems. On the one hand there is the possibility of describing a series of changes common to the major tribes of the Southeast. On the other hand, it may be possible to probe more deeply into the inter-relations of social institutions by examining them in the light of historical analysis, and to isolate certain types of change and state the conditions under which they took place;

these conditions can then be compared with those in other similar situations of culture contact in an attempt to discover empirically derived regularities in the acculturation process (cf. Eggan, 1937). In a future publication on Southeastern kinship I hope to make at least a beginning attack on certain of these problems.

A comparative study of culture change among the Southeastern tribes naturally leads to field work with the least acculturated groups. Of these, the Florida Seminole are prime conservatives. My work among them was too brief to allow more than a glimpse into the culture they continue to maintain, though it was soon apparent that they represent an ideal tribe for the study of the effect of white contact on a small Indian group. The ethnographic data pertaining to them also have an important bearing on comparative problems involving the Oklahoma Seminole, the Creeks, and those other Southeastern tribes that are still extant. However, the turmoil of the present makes any future anthropological program a highly uncertain matter, and for this reason I am here publishing a brief sketch of the social organization of one of the Seminole bands. A fuller report awaits the completion of further field work.

I am indebted to Dr. Paul S. Martin, Chief Curator of Anthropology, and to Dr. Frederick Eggan for advice and criticism. Dr. Mary Haas has kindly checked the orthography of the Seminole terms. The ethnographic data were gathered from February to June, 1939, under a project supported by the Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago.

## II. CAMP, CLAN, AND KIN AMONG THE COW CREEK SEMINOLE

The Florida Seminole consist of the descendants of that handful of conservative Indians who refused to move west with the main body of the tribe after the Seminole wars of the nineteenth century. Dispersed through the southern part of the Florida peninsula, the Seminole managed to keep largely to themselves until the invasion of ranchers, farmers, promoters, and tourists finally engulfed them. At the present time the Indians, still conservative, remain a foreign element in the dominant white-negro society of Florida. Lacking any formal tribal organization, they nevertheless maintain a certain tribal cohesion, based primarily on factors involving contrast or opposition to whites and negroes. The Indian women and a considerable number of the men continue to favor their own distinctive costume, few speak English with any degree of fluency, and all are very conscious of their singularity in the matter of race, language, and culture.

The Florida Indians number about six hundred. Though there is a high degree of cultural homogeneity among the tribe, two linguistic divisions are represented. The larger of these is the Mikasukis, speaking a Hitchiti language; the smaller is the Cow Creek Seminole, speaking Muskogee proper. It is with the latter group as they exist today that this paper deals.

When MacCauley visited Florida in 1880 he found the Seminole living in twenty-two camps at five widely separated settlements. The latter he called Cat Fish Lake, Fish Eating Creek, Cow Creek, Big Cypress, and Miami River, after the most prominent natural features connected with them. "These settlements," he wrote (1884, p. 478), "are from forty to seventy miles apart, in an otherwise almost uninhabited region. . . . The camps of which each settlement is composed lie at distances from one another varying from a half mile to two or more miles." Not long after MacCauley's visit, the Cat Fish Lake and Fish Eating Creek settlements were abandoned. The Cat Fish Lake Indians and probably a majority of those at Fish Eating Creek moved to Cow Creek territory where today they form the Cow Creek band, the northernmost division of the tribe. With a few exceptions, the individuals composing the Cow Creek band are to be found on the recently established Brighton reservation and at scattered camps west of Fort Pierce (Fig. 1). Including those Mikasuki individuals who have married into the

Cow Creek band, as well as several other Mikasukis who live in Cow Creek territory and participate in Cow Creek ceremonials, the band totals approximately 175 persons.

In addition to the linguistic and territorial criteria, there is another factor which defines the Cow Creek band as a social unit. This factor is the ceremonial organization. The band is an aggregation of single camps and assembles on only two occasions: at the annual Green Corn Dance in the spring, and at the Hunting Dance in the fall. The former is the more important and retains a great deal of its traditional significance. The old hierarchy of town king and subordinate officers has disappeared, but in its stead is a small council of elderly medicine-men, among whom the chief medicine-man is the acknowledged leader, particularly in matters relating to the Green Corn Dance. On their part, the Mikasukis maintain two ceremonial organizations. However, I found no evidence that these three Seminole "fires" were divided according to a white and red dual division, such as formerly prevailed among the Creeks and Oklahoma Seminole.

## THE CAMP

Seminole daily life revolves around its most obvious unit, the camp (*istihapó*). The term can be taken in two ways: on the one hand it is where the household group lives, and on the other it is the group itself. We may first consider the former of these meanings and describe briefly the general appearance of the camp.

The Cow Creek camp is built on a high spot among the pines or on a hammock, depending on the type of country. The camps are all constructed on a similar pattern and consist of a number of palm-thatched, open-sided houses built around the outer zone of a clearing, with a cook house in the center. The houses face toward the center of the clearing and fan out in all directions from the cook house. The latter is a rectangular structure with neither sides nor floor and consists simply of a thatch roof supported by four posts. The surrounding houses are similar to the cook house, but they are larger and more substantially built, with floors raised some two feet off the ground. None has closed sides and in warm weather all are reasonably cool. One such house is always reserved for eating. In addition, each family in the camp has a house of its own, used as sleeping quarters, for the storage of food, clothes, and bedding, and as a working place for the women. Boys and girls over the age of ten or so sleep in separate houses, and an extra one may be needed. The major part of the floor space is used for sleep-

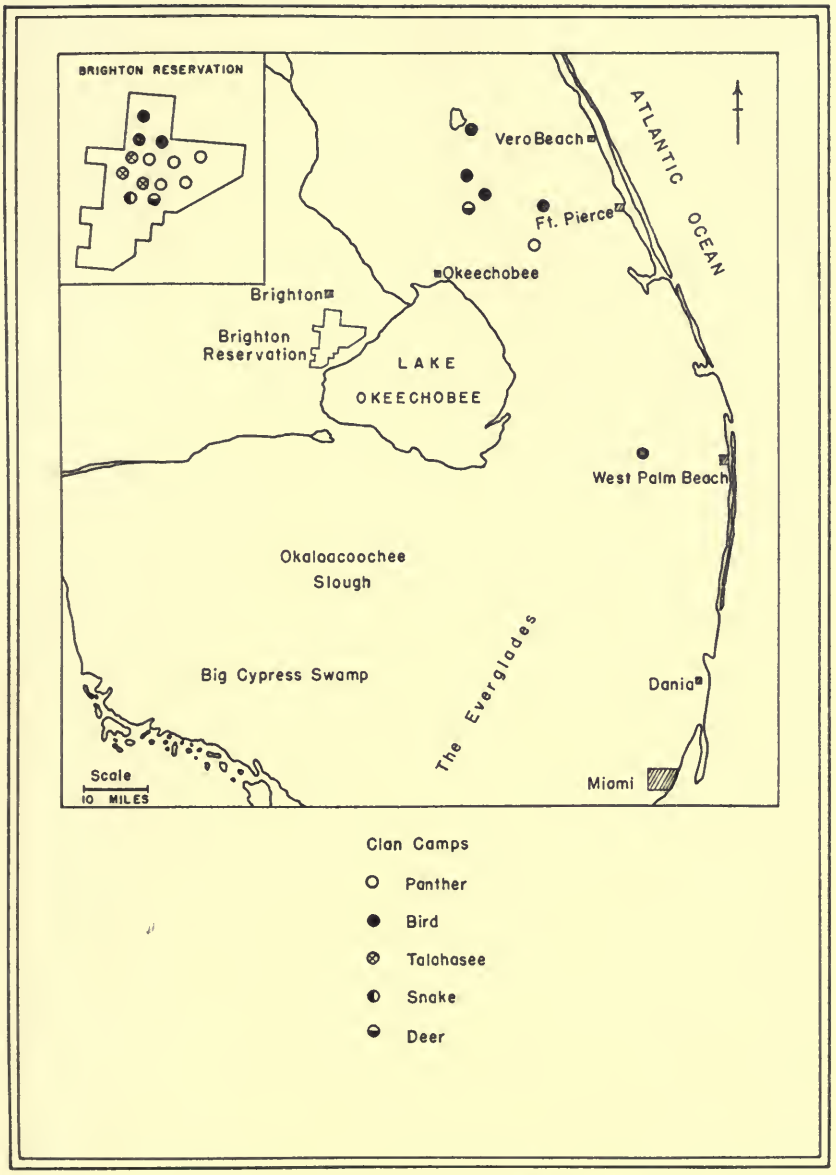


FIG. 1. Clan camps of the Cow Creek Seminole.

ing, except that during the day the scanty bedding and mosquito-bar are rolled up to permit a place for lounging and for the women's sewing. A Singer sewing machine, which every worthy matron possesses, sometimes a portable phonograph, and a miscellaneous assortment of bundles of clothing and large lard cans containing food supplies occupy the remainder of the floor space.

The other features of the camp are a collection of miscellany. During the day the yard is cluttered with dogs, pigs, chickens, and small children, through which *mélange* the women calmly move. Platforms are set here and there and serve a variety of purposes—to butcher a pig or simply as a place to keep the cumbrous wooden mortar and pestle used in grinding corn. Behind the family house is often a second small one, just large enough for one person, used by the wife for a month after the birth of her child, during which time she cannot associate with men and must cook, eat, and sleep alone. After this period the house stands empty until the next confinement. Finally, at the edge of the camp there is a pile of firewood and a pigpen where sick pigs and hogs can be doctored. These are the outposts of the camp.

The membership of the camp is based on the matrilineal lineage. A camp is usually composed of a woman, her daughters, and their children, and the husbands and unmarried brothers of these. Occasionally the camp consists of the elementary family, with a man, his wife, and their children the sole occupants; if this occurs the children are apt to be numerous. In other cases, the camp is expanded to include female first cousins or even women more remotely related, together with their husbands and children. But in any event a basic rule is observed—the women in a camp belong to one clan. Cow Creek clans are matrilineal, and residence after marriage is matrilocal. Unmarried men live with their sisters or mothers and so all belong to the same clan, but the husbands in any given camp necessarily come from other clans. Thus when a man marries, he goes to his wife's camp, builds her a house, and moves in. Later on, if the two of them do not get along, a divorce is effected simply by the husband's packing his few personal belongings and moving out. Children remain with the mother, and the father need not assume any further responsibilities for the upkeep of the children or of his erstwhile wife.

Members of the Cow Creek band all maintain permanent camps. The membership of a camp, however, is not fixed and unvarying. Aside from visiting each other for reasons of pleasure, the Indians

are constantly coming and going. A man may work on the reservation but still have a dozen or so hogs ranging in country thirty miles away; every so often it is necessary for him to hunt his hogs and perhaps treat them for screw worm. Or a Seminole may become ill and leave to see a distant medicine-man for treatment. In the spring the women work as pickers in the vegetable fields near Fort Pierce, Vero Beach, and Lake Istokpoga; consequently they set up temporary camps for the duration of their stay. At other times they go off in more remote sections to gather huckleberries, which they sell in the towns. In this shifting around the strength of the clan emerges strongly. Thus when a man and his wife visit another camp for an overnight stay they go to one where the women belong to the wife's clan. This is the natural and expected procedure. On the other hand, if the man is unmarried or has left his wife at home he goes to a camp where the women are of his own clan rather than of his wife's. A man feels free to drop in on his own clan-mates, but not on those of his wife unless she is with him. Again, when women go off to the bean fields and set up temporary camps, they invariably separate according to clan. The feeling of clan solidarity is particularly strong with the women.

The camp is the food-consuming group and as such is a basic economic unit. Food is prepared and eaten in common. Generally speaking, it is the duty of the men in the camp to provide the food (or the money to buy it) and the women to prepare it. The women take charge of the food supplies, and the housewife of each family within the camp doles out her share to the common supply. If she is stingy or her husband a poor provider, conflict inevitably breaks out. Thus, although the camp usually consists of an extended family group, quarrels arising over food throw into relief the individuality of the elementary family as this exists within the more inclusive household unit. A man is first of all responsible for providing and caring for his own wife and children—an unmarried man his sister or mother.[1] Also, though personal possessions such as sewing machines, automobiles, and tools may be lent to others in the camp there is no doubt about the family to which they belong.

On the whole there is a greater feeling of solidarity among the women of a camp than among the men. The men may belong to

[1] Women whose brothers are married can find a place at the camp of a married sister, real or classificatory. Widows live with their daughters. Actually single women are not at a great economic disadvantage at the present time, for they can derive a considerable cash income from work in white-owned vegetable fields and from the sale of dolls to tourists. There are a number of single women who are financially independent.

more than one clan but the women are closely united by the kinship and clan bond. This solidarity of the women seems to be the most important cohesive element in keeping the extended family together. On the other hand, there are certain factors tending to limit the size of the camp. In the old days the importance of hunting made for a dispersion of the population and acted to keep down the number of persons in a single establishment. Today probably the most important factor is that the domestic arrangements with respect to cooking and eating function best if there are not more than twelve or fifteen people in the Seminole household.

The camp and the clan are basic units in Seminole society. But the former is the more obvious, for it is a local as well as a kinship group, with its members living at one spot, and with the houses, cooking utensils, pigs, chickens, and other material appurtenances giving it a solidity of appearance and tangibility that the clan lacks. The camp provides a place for cooking, eating, and sleeping. Lounging on the smooth-worn floors of the houses, the people retail gossip and news, and the camp becomes the market place for the exchange of ideas and opinions. It is where the Indian relaxes, whether merely to lie in the shade of a thatch roof and contemplate the contrast of the green sword-like fans of the surrounding palms against the blue of the sky, or to sample a jug of liquor with some friends. It provides the *milieu* in which children play and are reared; where they are told trickster tales by their mothers and are occasionally punished by an elder; and where they gradually extend the range of their acquaintance to include their fellow tribesmen. The camp witnesses the establishment of new families and the break-up of old. It is the scene of jealousy and conflict, whether such be over a love affair or the more mundane matter of having enough corn to make safki. A place of comfortable disarray, the Seminole camp is the core of the Indian's daily life.

## THE CLAN

Among the Cow Creek Seminole there are five matrilineal exogamous clans, four of which are totemic. The names of the five clans are as follows: Panther, Bird, Talahasee, Deer, and Snake. The existence of the non-totemic Talahasee ("old town") clan is puzzling. MacCauley stated that the Cow Creek and Cat Fish Lake Seminole called themselves "Talahasee Indians." This was in 1880. However, informants' testimony indicates that the Talahasee clan all lived at Cat Fish Lake. Also there is a disposition on the part of the members of this clan to regard themselves as a

subdivision of, or at least very closely linked to, the Bird clan. I have separated Bird and Talahasee because they maintain a separate chain of camps and because in the eyes of my non-Talahasee informants they are distinct.

In addition to the clans named above, there are several others represented by Mikasuki individuals residing with the Cow Creek band. These clans are the Otter, Bear, and Talwałako. The Talwałako ("big town") clan is non-totemic. It is not a Mikasuki version of Talahasee but is an independent clan, though it is "related" to Otter and the two clans are not supposed to intermarry. The presence of these two non-totemic clans among the Florida Seminole raises the remote possibility that they may be the remnants of broken towns which have acquired the status of clans.

The phratry organization is still extant. However, the clan is the more important social unit, for the phratry is simply a linking of clans and assumes significance primarily in marriage prohibitions. Of the linkages among the Cow Creek clans, that between Talahasee and Bird is the strongest; these two clans never intermarry. Next in strength is the Panther-Deer linkage. Panther is the "uncle" of Deer; these clans are also not supposed to marry, though I have recorded one such union. The weakest link of all is that between Bird and Snake. This is merely traditional. Bird was the "uncle" of Snake and formerly the two were not supposed to marry; actually there are two such marriages today, the parties to which are well thought of by the tribe. At present, therefore, the linkages are Bird-Talahasee, Panther-Deer, with Snake standing alone. Traditionally, the system was that of a dual division, with Bird, Talahasee, and Snake on one side and Panther and Deer on the other. This division still has a limited function in the ceremonial sphere. Thus, when boys reach puberty, they are given ceremonial names at the Green Corn Dance in the spring. The ceremony of name-giving is not performed every year, as the band waits until a number of boys are ready. When this occurs, an old man from one side of the dual division bestows the names on the boys from the other side. The ceremonial names, however, tend to descend in clan lines, with a young boy receiving the name of a dead clansman. So far as I could determine, the clan divisions are unnamed, the *hata·ka* and *cilo·ko* of the Creeks and Oklahoma Seminole not being used.

The relation of the clan to the camp has been briefly noted. The camps of a single clan are all connected through the women's belonging to one clan. The clan bond both supplies a prerogative—

that of descending on one's clan-mates for food and lodging—and imposes an obligation—that of being hospitable to visitors if one is a host, and of providing food if one is a long-staying guest.

The clan is also a political unit. In case a member of one clan is murdered by an Indian of a different clan the bereaved clan will kill the murderer if it can catch him, or another member of the offending clan if it cannot. This is the traditional rule, though I do not know if it would be followed today. Also, a sexual union between two members of a single clan is considered incest, and formerly both would have been severely punished. There is a problem here, however, as to the relation of the clan to the band organization in the punishment of crime. It is a question on which I have no reliable data, as the Indians were extremely reticent in discussing such matters.

Lastly, the clan has an important place in the ceremonial organization of the band. At the time of the Green Corn and Hunting dances the various clan camps draw together like beads on a string, with each clan setting up one large camp for the duration of the festival. Ceremonial offices also tend to descend in clan lines; the head medicine-man of the band always belongs to the Panther clan. The watchers who exhort the people to dance, those who gather wild medicinal herbs for the medicine taken at the Green Corn, and various other officials are usually chosen from particular clans. The ceremonial organization has simplified in the past century, but the clan retains an important rôle.

## KINSHIP

The clan, the camp, and the elementary families composing the latter are the basic social groupings within the relatively loose framework of the band organization. The ramifying bonds of kinship underlie these units and bring them into relation with one another to form a coherent social structure.

### KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Although most of the Cow Creek Seminole kinship terms are identical with those collected by Swanton for the Creeks, the application of the terms differs somewhat (cf. Swanton, 1925, pp. 80–88). The Florida system is closer to a pure Crow type, as all descendants of the father's sister through females are classed as "little fathers" or "grandmothers," irrespective of generation differences. The non-vocative forms of the kinship terms and their applications are given below.

MAN SPEAKING:

"Father" (*cálki*). Applied to the father only.

"Mother" (*cácki*). Applied to the mother only.

"Little father" (*całkocí*). Applied to the father's brother and to all males in the father's clan; to the husband of the mother's sister; and to the husbands of women called "little mother," with the exception of the mother's brother.

"Little mother" (*cackocí*). Applied to the mother's sister and to all women of the first ascending generation in ego's clan; to the wife of the father's brother and to all wives of men called "little father"; and to the mother's brother's wife.

"Grandfather" (*capocá*). Applied to the father's father, the mother's father, and to the brothers and sisters of these; to old men of the second ascending generation in ego's clan; and to the husband of any woman called "grandmother."

"Grandmother" (*capósi*). Applied to the father's mother, the mother's mother, and to the sisters of these; to old women of the second ascending generation in ego's clan; to the father's sister; and to all females in the father's clan.

"Big grandfather" (*capoca·łákko*). Applied to members of the father's father's and mother's father's clans (regardless of sex), other than those relatives already noted.

"Uncle" (*capáwa*). Applied to the mother's brother and to all men of the second ascending generation in ego's clan.

"Older brother" (*całáha*); "younger brother" (*cacósi*). A man differentiates older and younger brothers. The terms are applied also to all males of ego's generation in ego's clan, and to all sons of men called "little father."

"Sister" (*ca·wánwa*). A man uses only one term for a sister. This term is applied also to all females of ego's generation in ego's clan, and to all daughters of men called "little father."

"Son" (*cappocí*); "daughter" (*caccósti*). Applied to ego's children, to the brother's children, to the mother's brother's children, to the children of any man called by a brother term, and to the children of a man belonging to ego's clan.

"Nephew" (*anhopóywa*); "niece" (*anhakpatí*). Applied to the sister's children, and, by extension, to the children of any woman called "sister"; thus everyone in the first descending generation in ego's clan is either a "nephew" or a "niece."

"Grandchild" (*amosóswa*). Applied to the child of any "son" or "daughter," "nephew" or "niece." The child of a "grandchild" is also referred to as a "grandchild."

"Wife" (*cahéywa*). Applied to the wife only.

"Sister-in-law" (*cahacawá*). Applied to the wife's sister, to the brother's wife, to the clan sisters of the wife, and to the wives of classificatory brothers.

"Brother-in-law" (*aŋkapóci*). Applied to the wife's brother, and, by extension, to the clan brothers of the wife.

"Brother-in-law" (*ancokowákki*). Applied to the sister's husband, and, by extension, to the husbands of classificatory sisters.

"Parent-in-law" (*anhoktálwa*). Applied to the wife's parents. Can also be used for the mother-in-law's brothers and sisters.

"Child-in-law" (*anhatísi*). Applied to the spouse of a "son," "daughter," "nephew," "niece," or "grandchild."

WOMAN SPEAKING (the usage is the same, with the following exceptions):

"Brother" (*cacílwa*). A woman groups older and younger brothers under one term. It is applied to the brother and to all males of ego's generation in ego's clan, and to sons of men called "little father."

"Older sister" (*całáha*); "younger sister" (*cacósi*). A woman distinguishes between older and younger sisters. The terms are also applied to all females of ego's generation in ego's clan, and to daughters of men called "little father."

"Child" (*caccóswa*). A woman does not use separate terms for "son" and "daughter," but calls a child of either sex by the same term.

"Little child" (*caccosóci*). Applied to the sister's children, and, by extension of the system, to any child of a woman called by a sister term.

"Grandchild" (*amosóswa*). A woman uses this term for the brother's children; for the mother's brother's children; for the children of anyone called "child," "little child," or "grandchild"; and for children of men belonging to ego's clan.

"Husband" (*cáhi*). Applied to the husband only.

"Sibling-in-law" (*cahacawá*). Applied to the husband's brother and sister, and, by extension, to his clan siblings, and to the brother's wife and the sister's husband.

In addition, the following terms are in common use:

*iticâ·kkiya·t.* A covering term for sibling, used for either a brother or a sister, real or classificatory.

*cahéyca.* Frequently used for the father's brother or any male of the father's clan as an alternative to "little father." The use of *cahéyca* is interesting, as it injects a non-classificatory element into a system that is in other respects strongly classificatory.

In the extension of kinship terms, the Cow Creek system is based on the clan. However, although the system is logical and consistent, in actual practice it works somewhat differently from the manner outlined above. The reason for this lies in the small number of Cow Creek clans, and in the fact that Panther, Bird, and Talahasee clans comprise more than three-quarters of the band. As far as terminology goes, Bird and Talahasee are one, for the members of the two clans use kinship terms as though they were. The two clans also cannot intermarry. As a consequence, most marriages are necessarily between Panther people on one hand and Bird-Talahasee people on the other. This in turn affects the terminological system, for people are constantly marrying into the father's clan. The consequence is an interesting combination of a large number of "cross-cousin" marriages with a Crow type of system. For many relatives, therefore, an individual can make a choice between alternative kinship terms. The Indians are conscious of the alternative possibilities, and the question arises as to whether the choices they make follow a definite pattern. During the course of field work, I noted the following tendencies:

(1) If the person referred to belonged to ego's clan, ego selected a term he would ordinarily use for a member of his own clan in preference to other possible terms.

(2) In a large number of cases two individuals belonged to each other's father's clans; that is, A belonged to B's father's clan and B belonged to A's father's clan. A (male) could therefore call B "little father," *cahéyca,* or "son" (if B were male), or "grandmother" or "daughter" (if B were female). A (female) could call B "little father," *cahéyca,* or "grandchild" (if B were male), or "grandmother" or "grandchild" (if B were female). B had the same choices in referring to A. The only pattern of usage I could discern in such instances occurred when there was a marked age difference between A and B. In such cases the difference of age tended to determine the choice. Thus if A (male) were much older than B, he would call B "son" or "daughter," and B would call A "little father" or *cahéyca;* if A (female) were much older than B, she would call B "grandchild" and B would call A "grandmother." *Cahéyca* seems to be used quite as much if not more than "little father." It carries no connotation of older or younger and is frequently used between men of different ages who belong to each other's father's clan.

(3) Where a choice between the two is possible there is a tendency to use consanguineal terms at the expense of affinal. Some affinal relatives, particularly the father-in-law, very often belong to ego's clan, while many other affinal kin are likely to belong to the father's clan. In the latter case, the appropriate terminology for the father's clan usually takes precedence, unless the affinal relatives are close blood kin of the spouse, in which case either affinal or consanguineal terms are used.

These are the only usages I discerned in the choice of kinship terms. However, a longer and more intensive investigation is needed to support or disprove them fully, while there may possibly be other patterns of usage which escaped my notice. In any case one point is clear. The small size of the band, the limited number of Cow Creek clans, and the disproportionate size of three of these has cramped the full and extended working of the terminological system, for the Florida Seminole have been forced to marry into the father's clan for several generations. As a consequence there are a large number of cross-cousin marriages, though in its basic features the

Crow type of kinship system prevailing among the Cow Creek band remains unchanged.

## KINSHIP BEHAVIOR

A full exposition of kinship behavior among the Cow Creek Seminole is beyond the scope of this paper. I include here only a few general observations.

The behavior expressed in the ordinary person-to-person relations among the Cow Creek Seminole is quite informal. The band is small; everyone knows everyone else; there are no great discrepancies in wealth; and, though considerations of social status exist, they are not conspicuously apparent. There is a lack of highly formalized patterns of behavior. Personality factors and how well individuals know and like each other play a considerable rôle, so that kinship behavior is rather individualized. It is difficult, therefore, to generalize on the type of behavior expressed in a given relationship and to classify it with regard to criteria such as familiarity and respect. The latter exist, of course, and are about as follows: Respect behavior is characterized by an absence of joking or teasing. The persons concerned avoid bodily contact, such as tussling or even one man's putting an arm across another's shoulders. A respectful demeanor is demanded. One is careful about listening to what the other person has to say, restrains any tendency to talk too much, and avoids boasting. As for familiarity, there are no highly formalized joking relations. As a matter of fact, among the Cow Creek Seminole joking is not particularly noticeable. This is not to say that the Indians are unduly sombre. Joking is indulged in from time to time, but it has not been elaborated into an institutionalized, formal type of behavior proscribed in certain kinship relations. On the whole, familiarity consists simply of varying degrees of an absence of those restraints characteristic of respect.

## THE FAMILY

*Siblings.*—The relation between siblings is rather easy and informal, except that familiarity between brother and sister is restrained. As siblings of opposite sex grow to maturity they may joke or tease each other a little but not much, while they avoid tussling or bodily contact. Age differences also affect sibling relationships, though this is perhaps more noticeable with adults than with children or adolescents. Where the difference amounts to some ten years, the younger sibling's attitude toward the older

one is tinged with respect, though a good deal depends on the strength of character of the elder sibling.

*Parents–children.*—Seminole parents are very fond of children and treat them with considerable indulgence. On certain points, however, there is no compromise, and discipline falls swiftly on the child who refuses to obey his parents in matters they feel to be important. For serious punishment the mother's brother is called upon to scratch the arms and legs of the child with a needle or sharpened nail. However, I was told that girls were not punished in this manner, and I saw only boys with scratches.

The behavior of children toward their parents is one of respect; the former are supposed to be obedient and attentive and do not indulge in joking. On their part the parents occasionally tease their children a little, but this is not marked. The mother looks after small children of either sex; as they grow older the boys' and girls' interests diverge, with the father becoming more responsible for the boys' education and the mother continuing her care of her daughters.

*Husband–wife.*—The relations between husband and wife are quite informal and vary from couple to couple according to their individual temperaments. A wife usually accompanies her husband on visits to other Indians and on trips to town. Seminole women have a very independent spirit. Aside from the duties which traditionally fall to a wife she usually is ready to seize small opportunities to earn a little money, whether it be a matter of making dolls, dressing a buckskin for a white hunter, or picking berries and selling them in town. On her colorful clothes and her husband's bright dress shirts she spends a great amount of time and the whir of a portable Singer sewing machine is one of the usual accompaniments of camp life.

*Mother's brother–sister's child.*—In cases where the mother's brother is unmarried and lives with his sister his influence is marked. He is close and can easily be called on to lecture disobedient nephews and nieces and to punish them if need be. He often takes a general interest in his sister's child and looks after the latter in various small ways, such as seeing that his nephew or niece receives treatment in times of illness. However, if the mother's brother is married he lives at a different camp, and though he may retain an authoritarian rôle, his influence is usually confined to an occasional act of discipline. Some married uncles are more solicitous of their nephews and nieces than others, of course. But there are other

cases where the mother's brother takes little interest in his sister's children, particularly after they have reached adolescence. To judge from my conversations with a few of the older men, the influence of the mother's brother over his sister's children is declining and the authority of the uncle has been decreasing in the last three decades. I believe that this is the trend, but I also feel that its inception may be due to factors which are nearly a century old. The scattering of camps as the Seminole retreated into the fastness of the southern interior no doubt tended to decrease the intensity of contact between a married man and his sister's child. This in turn would weaken the tie between the two, except where the mother's brother was unmarried and lived at his sister's camp. Also, if some provision were made for the nephew or niece to stay at the married uncle's camp the two would retain close contact, but there is no evidence that this was a regular practice. The behavior of nephews and nieces toward the mother's brother is still one of respect, however, and in return the mother's brother seldom indulges in teasing his sister's children.

*Grandparents–grandchildren.*—To one's grandparents one is respectful and attentive, while on their part the grandparents are apt to spoil their grandchildren a little. Also, a grandmother plays a considerable rôle in keeping a camp together, for her interest in her daughter's children strengthens the matrilineal lineage which so often is the core of the camp organization. In one camp I know, it is the grandmother who is the most important person in ironing out quarrels and conflicts.

To all old people one is supposed to show an attitude of respect. Most older persons know some magic, a fact which helps maintain the respect accorded them. This is particularly true of the more influential of the older men, all of whom are practitioners of magic and medicine. With a few old individuals whose only claim to respect is their age, younger men and women may be outwardly respectful, though holding the former in low regard.

*Parents-in-law–children-in-law.*—Regardless of sex differences, this is a strong reciprocal respect relation. However, there is no attempt at avoidance and one is free to communicate directly to a parent-in-law of opposite sex. Also, it should be pointed out again that the father-in-law is very likely to belong to ego's clan. A man's father-in-law is thus also his classificatory uncle. When a man marries into a camp he is supposed to be helpful to his parents-in-law

and to be ready to share in the responsibilities devolving on the men of the camp.

In the extension of behavior to relatives falling outside the circle of the immediate family, behavior patterns seem to be based primarily on differences of age and sex. The situation can be summarized as follows: Familiarity is stronger between persons of the same sex and approximately the same age than it is between persons of opposite sex and disparate ages. Conversely, respect is most marked in intersexual relations and between persons of different ages. This fact involves a lack of correlation in certain relationships between the more overt forms of respect-familiarity behavior and kinship terminology (particularly in regard to the relations between ego and members of the father's clan), though the essential features of the terminological system remain intact.

## LEVIRATE AND SORORATE

At times of remarriage after the death of the spouse there seems to be no compulsion to enforce either the sororate or the levirate. It is true that some persons have remarried into the same clan, but I know of no one living today who has married a blood sibling of the deceased spouse. In the six cases I recorded where living persons have remarried, three persons married second spouses who belonged to the same clan as the first, while the other three took spouses from clans different than that to which the first spouse belonged.

The absence of a formally sanctioned sororate and levirate may account for the classing terminologically of the mother's brother's wife with the mother's sister rather than with the sister-in-law. One informant did say that the mother's brother's wife could be called either "little mother" or "sister-in-law." Actually, however, the mother's brother's wife very often belongs to the father's clan and is thus called a "grandmother." Among the Oklahoma Seminole the sororate formerly prevailed, and the wife's sister, brother's wife, and mother's brother's wife were all classed together as potential spouses. The institution of sororate and levirate has apparently sunk into oblivion among the Cow Creek Seminole. I am inclined to believe that the reason for this is to be found in the small size of the band and the consequent lack of choice left to the society in regulating the remarriages of its members.

## III. CONCLUSION

The preceding remarks are offered as a brief sketch of certain outstanding features of Cow Creek social organization. The Seminole data are important with respect to the following points:

(1) The Cow Creek band has preserved aspects of social organization which have not survived among the Oklahoma Seminole and the Creeks. The examination of these institutions helps clarify the picture of aboriginal, or near-aboriginal, conditions. The principal example is the extended family, which continues to exist as a type of social grouping in Florida, though it has long since disappeared among the Oklahoma groups.

(2) The Florida data have reference to certain problems raised in the comparative study of culture change among the Southeastern tribes. Thus the available information on Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Creek kinship systems has been analyzed by Eggan, who concluded that formerly they all conformed to a Crow type, that the variations from this type which they displayed in the pattern of descent from the father's sister represented a shift from a matrilineal toward a patrilineal emphasis, and that these variations were directly related to different degrees of the same type of acculturation (Eggan, 1937). The Cow Creek data support Eggan's conclusions. Inasmuch as the Florida Seminole are the least acculturated of the Southeastern groups, one should, according to Eggan's hypothesis, find that the Cow Creek descent pattern from the father's sister is closer to a "pure" Crow type than are the systems recorded from the other Southeastern tribes. This is exactly the case. Also, as most of the Seminole were originally Creeks, the Seminole terminology with respect to the father's sister's descendants is presumably representative of a condition of Creek social organization earlier than that reported by Swanton (1925, pp. 80–88).

(3) Although the Cow Creek Seminole preserve a number of features of social organization which have not survived among the other Southeastern tribes, the Florida group has by no means remained static and untouched by contact with whites. The changes in social organization which can be traced to contact have been of two main types. The first of these was dominant in Florida until recently. It followed directly from the Indians being greatly reduced in number after the Seminole wars and being forced to scatter through the more remote parts of the interior. The results

were a changed relation to the environment and a modification of the social relations among themselves, with a decreased population, a break-up of the town organization, a decline in the number of clans, and a distinct simplification of ceremonial life. In addition, the necessary prevalence of marriage into the father's clan gave rise to a set of kinship usages involving modification of the former kinship structure. These changes were initiated by white contact, but they rose in an indirect manner from it. The second type of social change is the consequence of direct and intimate contact with whites and is particularly characteristic of changes in social organization among those Southeastern tribes which were moved to Oklahoma. This form of acculturation is now beginning to be of predominant importance among the Cow Creek band. As a small Indian group whose history is relatively well known, the Cow Creek Seminole afford an opportunity to examine the effect of this recent type of contact on aspects of social organization such as the extended family, the clan, and the kinship system. A study of this sort should throw light on the changes in similar institutions in other Indian tribes; it is also a means of testing those hypotheses which have been offered as explanations of the social changes which have already taken place among the other major tribes of the Southeast.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY


EGGAN, FREDERICK

1937. Historical changes in the Choctaw kinship system. American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. 39, pp. 34–52.

HAAS, MARY

1939. Natchez and Chitimacha clans and kinship terminology. American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. 41, pp. 597–610.

1940. Creek inter-town relations. American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. 42, pp. 479–489.

MACCAULEY, CLAY

1884. The Seminole Indians of Florida. Bureau of American Ethnology, 5th Annual Report. Washington, D.C.

NASH, ROY

1931. Seminole Indians: A survey of the Seminole Indians of Florida. Senate, 71st Congress, 3rd Session, Document 314. Washington, D.C.

SKINNER, ALANSON

1913. Notes on the Florida Seminole. American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. 15, pp. 63–77.

SPECK, F. G.

1935. Siouan tribes of the Carolinas as known from Catawba, Tutelo, and documentary sources. American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. 37, pp. 201–225.

1938a. The question of matrilineal descent in the Southeastern Siouan area. American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. 40, pp. 1–12.

1938b. The cane blowgun in Catawba and Southeastern ethnology. American Anthropologist, n.s., vol. 40, pp. 198–204.

STIRLING, GENE

1936. Report on the Seminole Indians of Florida. Office of Indian Affairs, Department of Interior. 9 pp. (mimeographed). Washington, D.C.

SWANTON, J. R.

1925. Social organization and social usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy. Bureau of American Ethnology, 42nd Annual Report. Washington, D.C.

# INDEX


Acculturation, 7, 24–25
Avunculate, 21–22

Band, 9, 10

Camp, appearance, 10, 12; economic basis, 13; membership, 12–13; scattering of in past century, 22
Ceremonies, organization, 10; Green Corn Dance, 10, 15; simplification, 25
Cherokee, 7, 24
Chickasaw, 7, 24
Choctaw, 7, 24
Clan, 12, 13; ceremonial function, 15, 16; names, 14, 15; political function, 16; Mikasuki clans at Cow Creek, 15; Talahasee clan, 14, 15
Costume, 9, 21
Creeks, 7, 15, 16, 24

Divorce, 12

Eggan, Frederick, 7, 8, 24

Family, elementary, 13; extended, 12–14; behavior, 20–23
Food, 13
Fort Pierce, 9, 13

Haas, Mary, 7, 8
Houses, 10, 12; maternity, 12

Joking, 20

Kinship, behavior of relatives, 20–23; terminology, 16–20

Levirate, 23
Lineage, matrilineal, 12
Linguistic division, 9

MacCauley, Clay, 9, 14
Marriage, cross-cousin, 18–20; residence after, 12
Mikasuki, 9, 10, 15

Names, ceremonial, 15
Natchez clans, 7

Oklahoma Seminole, 8, 15, 23, 24

Phratry, 15
Population, 9, 10, 25

Seminole wars, 9
Settlements, 9
Siouans, 7
Sororate, 23
Southeast, acculturation, 8; problems in ethnology, 7, 24–25
Speck, F. G., 7
Swanton, J. R., 7, 16, 24

Tribal organization, 9

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 004363146